

genetical basis to work upon. That is the popular theory which my data definitely disprove.

The most important part of Dr. Vernon's communication is his admission in concluding that "It is still quite legitimate to believe in the existence of a purely innate general ability which is entirely determined by some form of Mendelian inheritance." That statement, made by one of the most brilliant of our younger psychologists, is a source of peculiar satisfaction to me, since it suggests the likelihood of future co-operation between psychologists and geneticists, which may lead to a solution of the wider problem of the genetics of the human mind.

Cambridge.

C. C. HURST.

Sterilization: Voluntary or Compulsory?

To the Editor, Eugenics Review

SIR,—I am not sure how far the six-course sentimental-intellectual meal offered by Mr. Herbert Brewer in your issue of April last under the above heading is intended as a reply to my letter, but as my name comes in with the *hors d'œuvres* I suggest the following brief comments:

Hors d'œuvres.—Yes, decidedly outside the main issue. The scene is laid in Germany—mine was laid in England. I agree that Germany has recently been worked up to an intense sense of race, and as a natural reaction has driven out a good proportion of a competitive race. This race, much to its benefit and merit, has exhibited an equal sense of race, or "fanatical racialism," though this has not always been obvious to the world or recorded in history.

Einstein and others seem to be referred to in an airy way as "biological off-scourings"; I used this expression seriously in my letter, referring to low types of mental defectives.

Another *hors d'œuvres* refers to solving eugenic problems "with guts instead of with brains"; I suggested intelligence to direct and guts to act.

Soup.—Germany will certainly be in it if she deals out a deadly sin and damnation in two worlds too widely. But despite Dr. Mapother's observations should not one defer judgment a little longer as to Germany's handling of the sterilization problem?

Fish.—The argument wants filleting and re-serving. Prohibition encroached on the personal freedom of the *sober majority* for the sake of the drunken minority. Sterilization encroaches on the personal freedom of the *unsound minority* for the sake of the sound majority.

Joint.—The meat of this paragraph seems to be the "evil of compulsory measures." But such are surely justifiable in the interests of a community when applied by responsible selected superiors to those whom they judge to deserve them.

Sweet.—This introduces a sweet reasonableness of view, which suggests that perhaps after an

indefinite period of go as you please and self-determination one may be allowed to query the efficacy of voluntary sterilization.

Dessert.—More sweet reasonableness. An entirely palatable definition of the task of the eugenic movement, which when carried to fruition might leave the public mind in a mood to accept compulsion, should it be necessary.

It is, of course, possible that the principle of pussyfoot steps and safety first suit England best in her present phase.

NORMAN A. THOMPSON.

Monte Carlo.

Sterilization a Birth Control Method?

To the Editor, Eugenics Review

SIR,—The recommendations of the Brock Committee seem to me to involve an unjustified restriction of liberty which is likely to hinder rather than to aid eugenic aims. The essence of their Report is that voluntary sterilization should be made legal for the bearers of serious latent or manifest hereditary defects; and the implication is that sterilization of other persons should be illegal except for therapeutic purposes.

But there are many people of normal heredity for whom sterilization would be beneficial, both for individual and social reasons. Why, for example, should it not be available to married women in whose cases further pregnancy would involve serious risk to health or life? For these the Ministry of Health sanctions contraceptive advice; but ordinary birth-control methods are never certain; sterilization is. Surely, too, sterilization should be permitted to married people who have reached the limit in the number of children they can support. Consider the case of an agricultural labourer, earning thirty shillings a week, with four children to keep on it. When such a man decides he does not want to have children for whom he has no bread why should vasectomy be denied him?

Surgical sterilization might well be applied to regulate the size of the normal family. By that means, plans as to the number of children may be exactly fulfilled. Other methods may lead to hardship and even tragedy, as when a woman who has borne a family while young, and then hopes and believes that her reproductive phase had ended, finds herself pregnant practically at the menopause.

There exist undoubtedly many people who would like to be sterilized in order to have no part in supporting future generations. Included in this class are people who are condemned to unnatural celibacy by bad economic conditions and irrational customs: for instance, the army of women teachers and civil servants and vast numbers of unemployed young men. There are also the marriageable people whose only prospect of a home is in one or two rooms, perhaps in a slum. There are those